GIEWS Country Brief

Madagascar

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Rice production in 2015 expected to remain below-average, but increase marginally compared to partially-improved 2014 output
- Food security conditions aggravated in areas affected by cyclones and floods, while dry conditions in southern regions raise concerns over a third successive year of reduced crop production
- An FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) is planned to take place in July 2015

Rice production in 2015 forecast at below-average levels

Harvesting of the 2015 rice crop began in late December 2014, with the bulk of crop harvested between April and June 2015. Production is tentatively forecast at a below-average level, reflecting generally erratic rainfall in most of the country and dry conditions in southern regions, but better than the previous two years. Heavy rains at the start of 2015, following passing of Cyclone Chedza, resulted in flooding and consequent crop damage. The most affected regions were Vatovavy Fitovinany and Atsimo Atsinanana, which combined contribute only 5 percent to the national rice output, however, crop losses will negatively impact on local supplies. A rapid crop assessment conducted by FAO in March indicates that the cyclone caused damage to about two-thirds of the paddy area in the most affected districts.

Southern regions, including Androy and Anosy, which recorded two successive years of reduced cereal outputs, suffered from a prolonged dry spell in last quarter of 2014 that severely impacted on crop development and lowered 2015 production expectations. Despite improved rains since the start of the year, cereal production (mainly rice and maize) is foreseen to remain depressed and similar to the low levels of the previous two years.

After two successful years, sufficient funding for the third and final year (2015/16) of the anti-locust campaign is needed to enable the country to enter a locust recession period; funds would be required by the end of June to ensure the successful prepositioning of supplies.

A planned joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM), scheduled to be conducted in July, is expected to provide more details on crop production and the overall food security situation.

Gradual increase in inflation

After a generally stable period in 2014, the year-on-year inflation rate rose gradually in the first quarter of 2015, driven partly by increasing food prices and higher transportation costs. However, lower international rice prices have helped to temper rice price gains in the country; imports of rice in the 2014/15 marketing year (April/May) are estimated to have decreased by approximately 25 percent from the high level of the previous year, reflecting the improved 2014 domestic output.
Cyclone damage and dry conditions aggravates food insecurity

Food security conditions are expected to temporarily improve in the current period, as the new 2015 harvest augments households’ food supplies. However, in southern regions, with production foreseen to remain close to the low levels of the previous two years, an ensuing tight supply situation is anticipated to have a negative impact on food security in 2015/16. In the southern regions of Atsimo Andrefana and Androy, the 2014 CFSAM had already noted an increased prevalence of food insecurity, reflecting reduced cereal production.

The 2015 floods had affected approximately 517,000 people, of which about 166,000 were assessed to be severely food insecure by FAO’s rapid assessment. The crop damage in some districts will result in reduced rice supplies from own production, sufficient for only two months in several districts. Recommendations from the rapid assessment include the provision of food assistance between August and October, while the report also recommends the rehabilitation of agriculture infrastructure and supply of tools and fishing equipment in the affected areas.